

5 A Day the Preschool Way

5 A Day Parent Handouts



5 A Day the Preschool Way

Sample Letter to Families



Dear Family Member,

The children at _____ are learning about 5 A Day. This is a national initiative to encourage Americans to enjoy the great taste and health benefits of eating at least five serving of fruits and vegetables each day. Your child may be bringing home activities and newsletters to share with you. In addition, you may be asked by a teacher or another parent to assist with activities, decorations or refreshments for special 5 A Day events.

You can also support your child's efforts to increase his/her fruit and vegetable consumption in many ways throughout the year. For example:

- Eat breakfast or lunch with your child and talk with him/her about the fruits and vegetables you are eating.
- Take your child grocery shopping and let him/her assist in selecting a new fruit or vegetable to try on a regular basis. This could be a fresh, frozen, canned or dried item.
- Give your child options! Let him/her choose which vegetable to serve at dinner some nights.
- Keep fruits and vegetables where kids can see them - like on counter tops.
- Send fruits, vegetables or 100% fruit or vegetable juices, to school or child care when snacks are requested for parties or special events.
- Be a role model! If your child sees you eating fruit and vegetables regularly, he or she will be more likely to eat them.

Please make every attempt to encourage your child to take part in our 5 A Day activities. Thank you for helping your child be healthier with 5 A Day!!

Sincerely,

5 A Day the Preschool Way

Learning with 5 A Day for Families



Food makes a very tasty teaching tool. As a parent or caregiver, you are your child's most important teacher and you know more about your child than anyone. You know that most children like to learn about new things and talk about the world around them.

You can use fruits and vegetables to help kids learn new skills and concepts about nutrition, health and the world around them. Try these fun ideas for 5 A Day "teachable" moments with your family at home and at the store.

1. How foods help make kids stay healthy:

- Talk about how fruits and vegetables help kids grow and be healthy. An apple a day can really help keep the doctor away.
- Talk about how munching on carrots can help you see in the dark.

2. Compare and classify:

- Compare the size, color, feel, smell or taste of one fruit to another – like apples and oranges.
- Talk about the size of fruits and veggies – from gigantic pumpkins, medium-sized pears, to tiny little blueberries.

3. Alike and different:

- Check out all the ways that oranges, grapefruit, lemons and limes are alike and all the ways that they are different.
- Discuss the different ways the same fruit can be eaten. For example, apple slices, apple juice, applesauce, dried apples and apple pie.

4. Colors and shapes:

- Point out fruits and vegetables that can be red (like potatoes, tomatoes and grapes) or green (like peas, lettuce and cabbage).
- Look for round items (like grapes, melons and kiwis) or tall skinny ones (like carrots, celery and asparagus).

5. Numbers and counting:

- Count the number of apples put into a bag at the store or count the number of peas in a pod.
- Count how many baby carrots eaten like a bunny or how many banana slices eaten like a monkey.

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Tips for Getting Kids to Enjoy 5 A Day



1. Microwaving is a great way to get kids to enjoy vegetables. Since microwaving helps vegetables retain their color, you can create eye-appealing combinations such as carrot coins and baby peas, or corn kernels with bright chunks of red pepper. Precut vegetable packages make them a snap to zap!
2. Make snacks kid-friendly – they'll enjoy helping in the kitchen and having a say in how they get their 5 A Day. Have them create their own vegetable tray for dipping in low-fat yogurt or dressing.
3. Get in the habit of packing a portable, peelable banana or orange in kids' backpacks to stave off those middle-of-the-day munchies. It sure beats a trip to the vending machine – no more sugary, high-fat snacks when fruits and vegetables are easy to grab!
4. Let kids get a scoop on things by having a melon baller handy – they'll have a ball making their own desserts from cantaloupes, honeydews and other melons topped with a scoop of low-fat frozen yogurt.
5. Keep things fresh and interesting by combining fruits of different flavors and colors, such as red grapes with pineapple chunks.
6. Add interest and excitement to the end of a meal by introducing more exotic fruits, such as mangoes, lychees and papayas.
7. Try fanning alternating sections of grapefruit and navel oranges into a pinwheel shape for a merry-go-round of fruity fun!
8. Have a bowl of apples on the table or a bag of ready-to-eat baby carrots in the refrigerator for easy munching. By making fruits and vegetables available and accessible, kids can reach for them instead of processed foods full of fats and sugars.
9. Make a 1-minute Banana Split. Cut a banana lengthwise and place into a dish. Fill with 1 or 2 scoops of low-fat or nonfat vanilla or lemon frozen yogurt and top with frozen strawberries and canned crushed pineapple.
10. Take children with you to the supermarket. Have them help you pick out fresh, frozen, canned and dried fruits and vegetables.
11. Set a good example – eat five or more servings of fruits and vegetables every day yourself!

Adapted from materials from Texas 5 A Day Week materials and NC Nutrition Education and Training Program.

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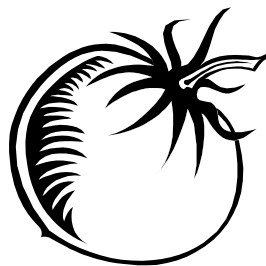
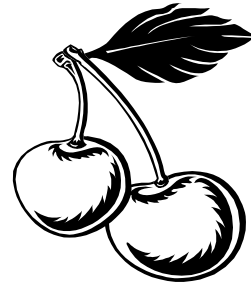


Shopping Smarts for Families

Fruits and vegetables have many health benefits. So how do we as consumers buy the best fruits and vegetables that are high in quality yet cost-effective? Below are some tips on how to buy the variety of colorful fruits and vegetables you need and save money, too!

Buy Your 5 A Day in Season

- Buy fresh, in season when possible. Seasonal produce is tastier and less costly.
- Purchase fresh-looking and fresh-smelling products; they'll last longer.
- Shop at a Farmers' Market to buy in season. Many times you can taste the product before buying.

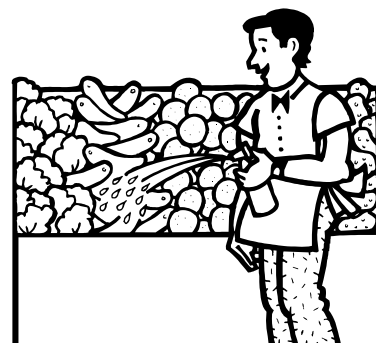


Buy Your 5 A Day on Sale

- Check your local ads in your newspaper or tour the produce aisle and look for good buys on items.
- Take advantage of in-store promotions. Use coupons. Some stores have coupons on-line you can customize to items you normally buy.
- Buy some items to store, and others to eat right away, so you'll always have a good supply.

Buy Your 5 A Day in Cans or Frozen

- You can get good nutrition in a can. Look for fruits packed in juice, as well as 100% fruit juices or juice mixtures.
- Wash away extra sugar syrup and sodium by rinsing canned fruits, vegetables and beans under cold running water for a minute or two.
- While fresh items are one way to get 5 A Day, you can more easily stay within your food budget with frozen and canned produce.



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8 Ways to Help Raise a Vegetable-Eater



On the following page there are Family Nutrition News and Tips. Included is "8 Ways to Help Raise a Vegetable-Eater." This is taken from the Celebrate Healthy Eating™ series from Dannon Institute.



Family Nutrition News & Tips

Make "Five A Day" Your Good-Health Goal

Health experts recommend at least "five a day"—three servings of vegetables plus two servings of fruit daily—for both children and adults.

Remember that what represents a serving is larger for adults than for young children. Let children determine their own portion size. Canned, frozen, or fresh fruits and vegetables are all good choices. Try serving raisins, seedless grapes, or canned peaches with tomorrow's breakfast for a good-morning start on five a day!

Vitamins C and A the Healthy Way

Here are some tips to be sure that your family gets enough of these important vitamins in the foods you eat.

- Serve a fruit or vegetable rich in Vitamin C every day. Vitamin C helps every cell in the body grow and stay healthy, especially the skin, bones, and immune system, which fights illness.

Good Fruit Choices: Oranges, grapefruits, and other 100% citrus-fruit juices; kiwi; strawberries; and cantaloupe

Good Vegetable Choices: Broccoli, peppers, tomatoes, cabbage, and deep-green leafy vegetables

- Serve vegetables and fruits high in carotenoids and Vitamin A a few times a week. Vegetables with rich colors are the best sources of carotenoids, which contain Vitamin A and help protect against disease. Some fruits also provide carotenoids, but not as much.

Orange and Red Vegetables: Carrots, sweet potatoes, pumpkins, and other kinds of squash, and tomatoes

Deep-Green Leafy Vegetables: Spinach, kale, and collard greens

Orange and Red Fruit: Mangos, cantaloupe, and apricots

When a Picky Eater Won't Eat...



"Eat your peas or no dessert!" is a common response to a mealtime standoff, but it can backfire. Pennsylvania State University researcher Leann Birch and colleagues found that forcing or bribing young children to eat does not work. It can increase children's dislike for the vegetable and reinforce their liking of dessert. Instead, ask the child to just taste the vegetable and then say no more.

Fear of an unfamiliar vegetable can also decrease when a child has repeated opportunities to try it. Remember that many young children are picky eaters. Your job is to provide a variety of healthful foods at every meal. Your child's job is to decide how much to eat and enjoy a mealtime gathering with the family.

8 Ways to Help Raise a Vegetable Eater

1. When shopping, let your child choose a vegetable for the family to eat.
2. At home, let your child help prepare the vegetable.
3. Many young children like raw vegetables. Have them ready in the refrigerator for snacks. *(Cut into small pieces and watch children as they eat. Young children, especially those ages 2 and 3, are at risk of choking on food.)*
4. Don't overcook vegetables. Steam, microwave, or stir-fry them. They will have brighter color, more crunchiness, and milder flavor.
5. Try a new vegetable at the beginning of the meal, when your child is hungriest.
6. Offer a new vegetable along with a familiar one.
7. Give your child a small serving or let your child choose the portion size.
8. Be a good role model. Smile when you pass, serve, and eat vegetables. Your child is watching!

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Buy it Fresh, Keep it Fresh

At The Store: Buying Tips

Apples:

Choose firm apples with smooth; clean skin, bright colors and no bruises or soft spots.

Bananas:

Look for bananas that are not under-ripe or over-ripe. 50% green and 50% yellow is just right.

Broccoli:

Florets should be compact dark green or purple-green in color, with tender, moist stems.

Cantaloupe:

Buy melons that are well rounded with a small "scar" at stem end. Seeds should rattle slightly.

Tomatoes:

Pick tomatoes that have a bright color, firm flesh, shiny skin, and feel heavy in relation to their size.

Peppers:

Buy brightly colored peppers with firm, thick walls. Avoid shriveled or pitted skin.

Pears:

Look for firm, smooth fruit without soft spots or bruising.

At Home: Care & Storage

Apples:

Can be stored for up to 4 weeks in the refrigerator. At room temperature, they will ripen 10 times as fast.



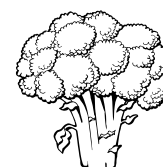
Bananas:

Ideal "holding" temperature is about 58° F. They ripen more quickly at higher temperatures.



Broccoli:

Best if used within 10-14 days of purchase. For best results, store in coldest part of the refrigerator.



Cantaloupe:

Handle carefully to avoid bruising, cracking, or puncturing. Store at 45-50° F for best results.



Tomatoes:

Leave in a warm, dry place with no direct sun and handle with care. They ripen best at room temperature.



Peppers:

If stored in the vegetable bin of the refrigerator, they will last for 8-10 days.



Pears:

Allow to ripen at room temperature, until they smell sweet and yield to gentle pressure with a finger.

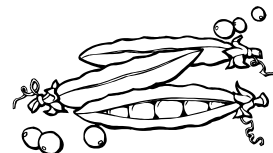
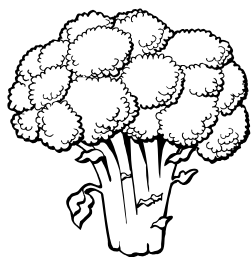


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Easy ways to get 5 A Day

Including 5 fruits and vegetables in your day can be easy and fun. Here are a few suggestions to get you started. Be creative and adventurous!



- As a main course, serve larger portions of vegetables and smaller ones of meat.
- Offer two vegetables and a salad at dinner—you'll save money, and cut down on fat and cholesterol at the same time.
- Snack on a variety of vegetables and fruits instead of expensive chips and cookies.
- Use fresh produce to enrich your soups, rice dishes and stews.
- Try new recipes or adapt your old ones to include more produce.
- Add sliced fruit to your cereal for breakfast.
- Add chopped, fresh vegetables such as broccoli and red peppers to homemade or store-bought pizza.
- Buy large bags of frozen, mixed vegetables and use them to make an easy stir-fry dinner.
- For a fruity snack, dip chunks of fruit into low-fat yogurt or chocolate pudding.

